MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

Final Report*
2001-2002

I. Introduction

The Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the Meetings of the States Parties, met in Geneva on 31 January 2002 and 30 May 2002. The meetings were supported by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and interpretation was provided thanks to the European Commission. They were convened by the Standing Committee's Co-Chairs, Mr Vice Skracic of Croatia and Mr Peter Truswell of Australia, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr René Haug of Switzerland and Mr Radu Horumba of Romania.

Representatives of more than 80 States Parties, more than 30 States not Parties, the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and numerous other international and non-governmental organizations participated in the work of the Standing Committee.

II. Overview of the Status of Implementation

At the Standing Committee meetings States Parties gave updates on progress in stockpile destruction, and some States not Parties presented information on their stockpiles. **The Co-Chairs stressed that this exchange of information was the most significant part of the Standing Committee meetings and strongly encouraged all States Parties and interested States not Parties to continue to provide updates at future Standing Committee meetings.**

The following 28 States Parties gave updates on their stockpile destruction programs during the meetings:

- Albania, Brazil, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Congo (Brazzaville), Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Nicaragua, Moldova, Mozambique, Peru, Romania, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, and Yemen.

The following 7 States not Parties made statements concerning stockpile destruction:

- Signatories: Greece, Indonesia, and Ukraine.
- Non Signatories: Belarus, Central African Republic, Turkey, and Yugoslavia (Federal Republic of).

All information from States not Parties was warmly welcomed, particularly the presentations from Greece and Turkey on their stockpiles which also outlined their plans to accede to the Convention simultaneously in due course.

In addition to these statements the ICBL Landmine Monitor gave overviews of the global situation regarding stockpile destruction at both Standing Committee meetings.

At the meetings of the Standing Committee the Co-Chairs distributed a chart presenting an up-to-date picture of the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention (Destruction of Stockpiles) on the basis of information from a variety of sources including Article 7 reports and updates at Intersessional meetings. The Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs will continue to update and circulate updated versions of this chart including at the September Fourth Meeting of States Parties. Up-to-date versions of the chart will also be available on the GICHD website.

The chart distributed at the May meeting showed that 76 States Parties had completed destruction of their AP mines in accordance with Article 4 or did not possess AP mines. Around 45 States Parties had yet to complete their stockpile destruction, of whom around 20 had not yet begun stockpile destruction. It should be noted that some States Parties have never declared whether they possess AP mines, but are not believed to stockpile them. In that context it was highlighted that adherence to the reporting provisions contained in Article 7 of the Convention is essential for assessing progress and identifying needs for assistance.

Between the May 2001 and May 2002 meetings of the Standing Committee, Albania, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Peru, Sweden and Yemen completed the destruction of their stockpiles.

The updates made by States Parties showed that the implementation of Article 4 is generally proceeding well. However, the Co-Chairs assessed, based on current trends and on updates from States Parties and Article 7 Report information, that a number of States Parties would have difficulty destroying their stockpiles on time during 2003.

III. Update on assistance and cooperation

The Co-Chairs emphasised that with deadlines fast approaching it was timely to focus assistance and cooperation efforts on those with pressing needs and deadlines.

A. Africa

The Standing Committee was presented with the conclusions of the stockpile destruction workshop held in Tunis in January 2002 – conclusions which included: that there are still considerable stockpiles in Africa; that there is insufficient information on exact location, number, type and condition of these stockpiles; that information exchanges on these stockpiles through Article 7 reports or through other means should be a priority in Africa; and, that for a number of States Parties in Africa

deadlines in 2003 were fast approaching. France declared a willingness to share its technical expertise in Africa.

B. The Americas

The Standing Committee was presented with an update on efforts related to the Managua Challenge by the Organisation of American States (OAS). The aim of the Managua Challenge was to encourage Parties in the region to destroy remaining stockpiles by the Third Meeting of the States Parties (3MSP). It was noted that while not all States Parties in the Americas had completed stockpile destruction by the 3MSP, the Challenge was essentially a success. Many had completed stockpile destruction, and many others were well advanced in their programs. Over 500,000 AP mines had been destroyed in the region. It was emphasised that an approach similar to the Managua Challenge could be applied in other regions.

C. Europe

The Standing Committee received updates on the activities of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe Reay Group in the field of stockpile destruction in the region. The Reay Group offered an excellent example of a regional mechanism that was assisting States to fulfill their Convention obligations, including their stockpile destruction obligations.

The Standing Committee also received updates on the role of NATO and its Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) in stockpile destruction within the framework of the Partnership for Peace (PfP). It has successfully concluded a program in Albania and has future programs in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. The Standing Committee was briefed on an October 2001 PfP workshop in Athens which focused its attention on several States in the region. The availability of assistance for PfP countries through a PfP trust fund was stressed.

The Standing Committee was briefed on the challenge posed by the destruction of large stocks of PFM mines in countries of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union and on the safety risks posed by specific construction features and toxic substances PFM mines contain. Also the conclusions of two GICHD studies on PFM mines were reported. They highlighted the risk of continued storage and explosive degradation of such mines as this type of mine approaches the end of its shelf life. It was noted that the objective of the GICHD studies is to develop a funding and technological approach to PFM stockpile destruction applicable to interested countries.

Two states in the region that are not yet parties to the Convention, Ukraine and Belarus, stressed that without assistance they would have difficulty destroying their stockpiles which impeded their ratification of the Convention. Both these states have large numbers of PFM mines.

D. Southeastern Asia

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reaffirmed its willingness to coordinate stockpile destruction within ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) countries. It

stressed that there was a need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach in the ASEAN region that takes advantage of synergies, information exchange and past experiences. With respect to Southeastern Asia it was noted that in May 2002 a regional seminar was held in Bangkok which highlighted the issue of stockpile destruction.

IV. Matters of a thematic nature related to implementation

A. Better use of Article 7 Reports

The Standing Committee suggested that Article 7 Reports might be a useful tool for providing more detailed information on stockpile destruction programs and for seeking or offering technical assistance. It was proposed that States Parties could use the reporting format's "Form B" and "Form F" to provide more detailed information on their destruction programs and to indicate specific technical and other needs for the completion of their stockpile destruction. It was noted that potential donors countries could use "Form J" to indicate specific expertise and technical advice that they are willing to share with other countries.

B. Focal Point for technical assistance and cooperation

The Standing Committee appreciated the offer by Implementation Support Unit (ISU, Kerry Brinkert, Manager) to serve as a focal point on information related to sources of assistance for stockpile destruction and direct requesting parties to these sources.

C. Stockpile Destruction Management Course

The Standing Committee was informed of a three day AP Mine Destruction Management Training Course for French speaking specialists in Martigny, Switzerland in June 2002.

D. UNMAS website

UNMAS reported that it was in the process of updating its "e-mine" web site to include new functions and more comprehensive information on stockpile destruction.

E. Contact Group

The Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs decided that a Contact Group of States Parties interested in ensuring that Article 4 (Stockpile Destruction) obligations were met, and in providing assistance if possible, would meet in the margins of future Intersessional Meetings and Meetings of States Parties. Such an initiative would be timely in view of the approaching stockpile destruction deadlines, and it would concentrate on discussing the situation of those States Parties with difficulties in meeting their Article 4 obligations and with close deadlines.

F. Safety and storage of stockpile destruction

The Standing Committee received presentations on general principles and measures with respect to the safe and secure storage of AP mines and ammunition, and on

various measures and methods for the management and use of mines retained under Article 3. The importance of reviewing such matters was underscored by presentations on recent incidents in Africa and Southeast Asia where casualties and devastation resulted from explosions of stockpiled munitions. The Co-Chairs expressed the opinion that discussion of the issue was important: firstly, because limited stockpiles kept for training need to be carefully stored, and secondly, because many States considering joining the Convention have very large stockpiles.

G. Industrial disposal of AP mines

The Standing Committee received a presentation on industrial disposal of AP mines and other types of ammunition. It was emphasized that for large stockpiles there is often no environmentally and economically acceptable alternative to industrial-scale disposal and recycling of materials for civilian purposes. Several examples of industrial destruction were highlighted, including the recently completed stockpile destruction program in Albania. Italy, which has nearly completed the destruction of around 7 million AP mines, offered to share its expertise in this area.

H. Basic elements of stockpile destruction

The Standing Committee was reminded of the basic elements, rules and techniques of stockpile destruction. It was pointed out that stockpile destruction is often more economically efficient and safer than storing old ammunition and propellants that degrade rapidly.

V. An assessment of needs that remain

The Standing Committee in 2001-2002 marked impressive progress in the efforts of States Parties to cooperate and assist each other in meeting the obligations outlined in Article 4 of the Convention. After three years of intersessional work, it is clear that the destruction of AP mines has become one of the Convention's success stories. However the Convention's first deadlines – those related to the obligation of each State Party to destroy its stockpiled AP mines within four years of entry-into-force – are only months away. The deadline for having completed the destruction of stockpiled mines in accordance with Article 4 is 1 March 2003 for the first 45 States Parties for which the Convention entered-into-force

A. Follow-up in 2002-3

While most States Parties that have stockpiles to destroy are proceeding well in their destruction activities, there is a need to focus on identifying the assistance needs of a few cases that may have difficulty in meeting close deadlines. There is a need to be innovative with respect to cooperation and assistance, and not to be complacent with respect to the urgency of the task. With these factors in mind, the Co-Chairs would make the following recommendations for follow-up in 2002-2003:

- Increased attention should be given to identifying the needs of States Parties whose stockpile destruction deadlines fall within 2003.
- States Parties whose deadlines fall within 2003 should provide updates to the Standing Committee and Co-Chairs on their plans and progress, and communicate any needs for assistance at their earliest convenience.

- Coordination should be carried out among donors to identify priorities for stockpile destruction assistance and relevant actors should consider taking advantage of the offer made by the ISU to act as a focal point on this matter. An informal contact group established by the Co-Chairs should continue to be used by those interested in encouraging full implementation by those whose deadlines are approaching.
- A regional approach to stockpile destruction should continue to be taken with regions for particular focus in the near term being Central Asia and Africa.

B. Follow-up on thematic issues

Finally, the Standing Committee in 2001-2002 identified various broader thematic areas that warrant follow-up over the next year. The Co-Chairs made the following recommendations:

- Given that the safe storage of stockpiles is important for prospective and existing States Parties in the process of destroying stockpiles and for those retaining some AP under Article 3, a study should be undertaken on accidents involving stockpiled AP mines to clarify the scope of problems that may exist.
- Attention should continue to be focussed on those mines, the detonation of which can have toxic side effects, such as the PFM1 type of AP mine, and attention should be focussed on identifying ways of destroying such mines in an environmentally sound manner.
- States Parties should continue to be encouraged to utilise the UNMAS stockpile destruction database (http://www.stockpiles.org), including by contributing information on new stockpile destruction technologies, national policies and case studies.
- States Parties should use the Article 7 reporting format's "Form B" and "Form F" to provide more detailed information on their destruction programs and to indicate specific technical and other needs for the completion of their stockpile destruction. States Parties in a position to do so should use "Form J" to indicate specific expertise and technical advice that they are willing to share with other countries.

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* This report has been submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee, Australia and Croatia. This report is the Co-Chairs' summary of the breadth of work undertaken by the Standing Committee during the 2001-2002 Intersessional period. It remains the responsibility of the Co-Chairs and is not a negotiated document.